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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879

VOL. III

NEW YORK, JANUARY 29, 1910

No. 14

It has been more than once emphasized that it is the teacher that counts in teaching Latin, as in teaching everything else, and the life of the class-room has its source, as a rule, in the genius that presides at the desk. It is also a trite remark that no two individual teachers—that are alive—have identical methods; and it is almost superfluous to add that that which constitutes individuality in a teacher's method is not found within the leaves of a text-book. Many suggestions have come to me from various quarters from teachers who thought that their own experience, or rather, perhaps, their own devices might help other teachers: which depends upon the extent to which the teacher who learns of these devices can assimilate suggestion and transmute it into a new method, not merely an imitation of the old. Consequently all accounts of individual experiences or individual devices have their value; and therefore teachers will find Miss Sabin's paper in *The School Review* for December interesting. It is called *An Experiment in High School Publication*.

It appears that in the Oak Park High School in Illinois the students of the Latin department issue a small paper called *Latine*, appearing six times a year, containing four pages per issue and all sorts of examples of the work of the students. While Latin is not the absolutely necessary medium, yet the majority of the contributions are in Latin. Miss Sabin gives the contents of the paper for two years, which I subjoin:

Doings of a Freshman on the First Day of School; Descriptions of Prominent Faculty Members; Poem to the Janitor; Advertisements: The Good Points of Danderine, Grapenuts, Gold Dust Twins, etc.; Jokes on Teachers or Pupils; Bright Stories in General; Valentines; Quotations from Caesar, Cicero and Virgil, Adapted to Personal Peculiarities of Pupils; Plays at Chicago Theatres; Well-known Novels; What I am Thankful For; Original Poems; Orations of the Turkey before Thanksgiving; How I spent my Summer; Interviews with Seniors; Reports on Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil when Boys at School; Poems, half English and half Latin like

Felis sedet by a hole  
Intenta she cum omni soul  
Prendere rats;  
Mice cucurrunt over the floor  
In numero duo, tres, or more,  
Obliti cats;

Continued Stories; Baseball News; Description of a Roman Banquet and Consular Elections; Imaginary Letters Written by Some Character in Caesar or Cicero; Bible Passages.

The object of the paper is (1) to meet the student on the common ground of humor, (2) to show the pupils that the language is adapted to modern life, (3) to afford material for sight reading so personal in its nature that for once in his life at any rate the pupil will be eager to read Latin, (4) to give the student a chance to contribute and see his name in the Latin paper, (5) to inspire a feeling of pride and dignity in the work of the department, (6) to keep before the mind of the pupil, without seeming to do so, and still more to bring to the attention of the father and mother the reasons for studying Latin and Greek.

In the sample number before me one contribution is entitled *Libri ab Omnibus Noti* and from the list of thirty-eight I cull the following: *Transitus, Mullierculae, Littera Coccinea, Sedes Potentium, Discrimen Rerum, Limes Pinus Solitariae, Domus Fastigiorum Septem, Superbia et Opinio Confirmata*.

A publication with a similar view, but issued, I think, only once a year, is *Sibylline Leaves*, published by the students of the classical department of the Central High School, Kansas City, Mo. This latter publication is a small book of forty pages, containing contributions of all sorts in Greek, Latin and English, pictures and news. It resembles in some respects certain annuals that one sees in schools, for we have accounts of students' plays, burlesques on studies, caricatures of leading characters in their courses. A caricature of Caesar and Ariovistus, Caesar with a small Aeduan clinging to the skirt of his tunic, facing Ariovistus whose heavy club rests on the outstretched form of a wretched Sequanian, I wish I could reproduce.

He would be a strange person who would despise such productions as those I have mentioned. Ephemeral in their character to be sure and rarely, if ever, containing anything that deserves to live, they yet are themselves signs of a vitality which is none the less real for being palpably fostered. If our students are to study Latin after the modern system the use of Latin is a desideratum; even its abuse may be welcomed. This point has been often emphasized in these columns and I do not need to refer back again to the eloquent words of Dr. Rouse. Latin ceased to be a spoken language during the Middle Ages because certain of its devotees set up a standard of Ciceronianism—a standard unreachable by thousands who yet spoke a Latin quite comprehensible. Better

a pupil who is sufficiently interested in his subject to write Latin sentences of his own volition ungrammatically, than a thousand of those who write it grammatically under compulsion. For the former there is much hope; for the latter there is little.

I strongly suspect that the majority of us teachers are over-pedantic in the bad sense, that is to say we set a standard of correctness which we ourselves would find difficulty in reaching and we hug the delusion that, because we have diligently worked out the exercise which we set our pupils to write, we are therefore critics of Latin style. As a matter of fact the range of ideas in our various class-rooms is so narrow and the range of expression is so straightened that it is a wonder our pupils get as much out of the study as they do and, were it not that they are unconsciously absorbing food for the mind in many shapes merely intimated by the work of the hour, the total results would be more barren than I care to contemplate. And so all such efforts as those indicated in the work at Kansas City and Oak Park are not merely to be tolerated but to be emphatically endorsed and, while no *Cicero redivivus* is likely to result, yet many of the students will find the road to the Capitol paved with something else besides rocks of offense.

G. L.

#### SYMPOSIUM ON FIRST YEAR LATIN.

At the annual meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States held at Haverford College on April 23-24 last, one session was devoted to a Symposium on First Year Latin: Essentials versus Non-Essentials. With the present number we begin the publication of the papers that formed part of this symposium. That these papers may be rightly understood we reproduce the outline of the symposium that formed part of the printed programme of the meeting:

- I. Pronunciation.—Miss Theodora Ethel Wye, Teachers College.
- II. Forms.—Mr. Charles C. Delano, Jr., Brooklyn Latin School, Brooklyn (now at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio).
  - (a) What forms must be learned? what forms may safely be eliminated?
  - (b) How can the essential forms be mastered? Should they be learned piecemeal? or in large blocks?
  - (c) Aids to teaching forms? modes of reciting or using paradigms to advantage? modes of fixing forms in mind?
- III. Syntax.—Miss Anna Petty, High School, Carnegie, Pennsylvania.
  - (a) What principles should be mastered in this year? what principles may be safely omitted?
  - (b) When should the study of syntax begin? at once? or should it be postponed until a goodly number of forms has been learned?
  - (c) Modes of presenting syntactical principles and of fixing them in mind?
- IV. Vocabulary.—Mr. Stephen A. Hurlbut, The Kelvin School, New York City.

- (a) How many words should be learned? what words? what meanings?
- (b) Aids to acquiring these words?
- (c) What part should word-formation play?
- V. Latin Writing.—Dr. George Depue Hadszitz, University of Pennsylvania.
  - (a) When should it begin?
  - (b) Place of oral work?
  - (c) Should there be much writing or little?
  - (d) How much should be attempted in this year?
  - (i. e. what principles of syntax should be attacked)?
  - (e) Helps?

#### I. THE PRONUNCIATION OF LATIN

The purpose of this symposium is, as I understand it, to separate the essentials from the non-essentials in first year work, and to suggest how the former may be emphasized.

Fortunately the question of the Roman pronunciation versus the English or Continental is hardly one which disturbs the teacher of beginning Latin to-day. Despite Professor Bennett's protests that matter is practically settled. If, however, there should be in the class some enterprising youth who reads *The Western Teacher* or *The New York Evening Post*, he too may ask why one should not say *jigno*, *jignere*, since it is so much easier and so much more like the English. Then the teacher must be ready to give practical reasons and explanations for the faith that is in her. It is not merely bad morals but bad strategy to find oneself compelled to say to a young and therefore critical student that a certain procedure is adapted because 'the colleges require it' or even because it is the latest thing. Perhaps it may be said, then, that for the teacher the first essential is a healthy conviction of the validity of the Roman pronunciation and the possession of reasons for the same that can be stated clearly and positively if the need arises.

The beginners' books all give more or less elaborate rules for the sounds of the vowels and consonants, but the teacher of experience knows that these are useful chiefly for reference and that pupils will acquire the correct sounds most readily by imitation. A very considerable amount of Latin, therefore, should be heard in the class-room in the first weeks of instruction. If one is so fortunate as to be able to use skillfully the direct or oral method, the pupils will have from the beginning abundant opportunity for practice in using Latin. Failing this desideratum, the reading aloud of *all* Latin set for study should be the invariable rule. At no stage in the secondary school curriculum is it more important that the cry of 'So much to do in forty minutes' should not induce the teacher to neglect this phase of the beginning work. If Ciceronian periods or Vergilian music are ever to have any meaning for the High School student the habit of hearing and using the language must be established from the very first days.